

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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EXDIS

NATO PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR EG JO
SUBJECT: ABDUL MUNIM RIFAI'S COMMENTS

1. JORDANIAN AMBASSADOR ABDUL MUNIM RIFAI CAME TO SEE ME THIS MORNING. HE FIRST RECOUNTED ROCKY ROAD OF RECENT EGYPTIAN/JORDANIAN RELATIONS, INCLUDING SADAT'S DISPLEASURE WITH HUSSEIN DURING LAST DAYS OF OCTOBER HOSTILITIES FOR FAILING TO MEET FORMER'S "DEMANDS" (UNSPECIFIED). HE THEN ADDRESSED CURRENT STATE OF PLAY BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO UPCOMING PEACE CONFERENCE AND TO PLO PARTICIPATION.

2. EGYPT'S PERFORMANCE DURING ARAB SUMMIT IN PRESSING FOR SEPARATE PLO ROLE HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTING TO JORDAN. RIFAI HAD BEEN IN AMMAN SINCE THAT TIME AND FOUND HUSSEIN ADAMANT ON REFUSING TO PARTICIPATE IN CONFERENCE IF ARAB STATES INSIST ON SEPARATE PLO REPRESENTATION. ACCORDINGLY, HE HAD BEEN SENT BACK TO CAIRO TO MAKE CLEAR JORDANIAN POSITION. SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVING THREE DAYS AGO, HE SAW FAHMY AND STRESSED JORDAN WOULD NOT FEEL ITSELF ABLE TO ATTEND UNLESS EGYPT AND OTHER ARAB STATES CLEARLY DEFINE ITS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ON WEST BANK. JORDAN HAS RESPONSIBILITY, HE STRESSED, FOR RECOVERY WEST BANK

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TERRITORIES AND PALESTINIAN REFUGEES NOT ONLY IN JORDAN BUT ELSEWHERE AS WELL. JORDAN WAS UNCLEAR WHETHER EGYPT WISHED IT TO ATTEND GENEVA TALKS. WHEN FAHMY COUNTERED THAT JORDAN INCLUDED AMONG ARAB STATES LISTED IN DRAFT LETTER

TO SYG AND THAT THIS SHOULD CONSTITUTE EGYPTIAN ENDORSEMENT OF JORDANIAN ATTENDANCE, RIFAI RESPONDED THIS WOULD REPRESENT INVITATION FROM THE TWO POWERS BUT WAS INADEQUATE TO DEMONSTRATE EGYPTIAN CONCURRENCE. HE ASKED FOR A PUBLIC EGYPTIAN STATEMENT SAYING IT EXPECTED JORDAN TO ATTEND AND REPRESENT WEST BANK AND PALESTINIANS WHILE THERE. FAHMY ALLEGEDLY CALLED IN AHAM CORRESPONDENT IN HIS OUTER OFFICE AND DICTATED SHORT STATEMENT TO THE EFFECT WHICH, WHILE SOMEWHAT ANODYNED, RIFAI WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT. ALTHOUGH FAHMY INSTRUCTED AHAM REPORT THIS PUBLIC STATEMENT FOLLOWING DAY, IT HAS NOT YET APPEARED. HE HAS HAD NO EXPLANATION FROM FAHMY, HENCE EGYPT'S POSITION REMAINS UNCLEAR.

3. RIFAI IS SCHEDULED TO SEE SADAT TODAY. AT THAT MEETING HE INTENDS TO REITERATE JORDANIAN POSITION AS HE HAS GIVEN IT TO FAHMY AND OFFER SEVERAL ALTERNATIVES FOR EGYPT TO SHOW ITS DESIRE HAVE JORDAN THERE ON A BASIS ACCEPTABLE TO HUSSEIN: (A) A PUBLIC GOE STATEMENT SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH FAHMY DICTATED BUT WHICH NEVER APPEARED, (B) A MEETING BETWEEN HUSSEIN AND SADAT IN CAIRO PRIOR TO GENEVA TALKS IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE EGYPTIAN SUPPORT OF JORDANIAN POSITION, (C) FAILING THIS, A MEETING BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS AT A MINISTERIAL LEVEL TO WORK OUT SOMETHING SATISFACTORY. IF EGYPTIANS REFUSE ANY OF THESE ALTERNATIVES, RIFAI WAS PESSIMISTIC THAT HUSSEIN WILL BE WILLING TO ATTEND. THIS, HE CONTENDED, WOULD BE BAD FOR PEACE CONFERENCE.

4. RIFAI ALSO CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH PLO REPRESENTATIVES IN CAIRO TWO EVENINGS AGO. HE HAD POINTED OUT TO THEM HUSSEIN'S POSITION THAT JORDAN SHOULD IN FIRST INSTANCE REPRESENT ALL PALESTINIANS. AT A LATER STAGE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES MIGHT JOIN TALKS. HOW THIS MIGHT BE DONE SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AT CONFERENCE. HE CLAIMED PLO REPRESENTATIVES NOT ADVERSE TO HIS IDEAS, SINCE DEEP DIVISIONS EXIST AMONG THEM AS TO WHETHER AND HOW THEY SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN GENEVA TALKS.

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5. RIFAI ASKED IF FORMAL INVITATIONS HAVE YET BEEN SENT. I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS SURE US REPRESENTATIVE IN AMMAN DISCUSSING MATTER WITH JORDANIANS BUT IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING MODALITIES STILL BEING WORKED OUT. HE COMMENTED THAT IT WAS NOT MERELY A MATTER OF MODALITIES, BUT ALSO FORM WHICH ANY INVITATION TO JORDAN TAKES THAT WILL MATTER WITH HUSSEIN. HE PERSONALLY BELIEVES JORDAN SHOULD PARTICIPATE, BUT HE HAD TO ACKNOWLEDGE KING'S VIEWS WERE VALID AND HAD FORCEFULLY SOUGHT TO PRESENT THEM HERE. HE NOTED HUSSEIN'S STRONG SENSE OF PRIDE, AND OBSERVED MUCH WILL ALSO DEPEND ON RESULTS SECRETARY'S VISIT TO AMMAN.

6. RIFAI IS SCHEDULED RETURN TO AMMAN TOMORROW. IF JORDAN

PARTICIPATES IN GENEVA TALKS, HE THOUGHT HE MIGHT WELL BE THE JORDANIAN REPRESENTATIVE.

7. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH USINTOFF, JORDANIAN POLITICAL COUNSELOR ALSO MADE POINT THAT KING BELIEVES IT LIKELY THAT A WAY COULD BE FOUND AT GENEVA TO HAVE PALESTINIANS JOIN TALKS AFTER OPENING SESSIONS. HE STRESSED THAT HUSSEIN IS DETERMINED THAT JORDAN SHOULD BE REPRESENTED AND IS UNDERTAKING A BROAD DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN TO INSURE THAT IT IS. IN THIS CONNECTION, USINT NOTES AP DISPATCH DATEL

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